New data reveals rich regional insights into the pandemic

Media Release

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Source: Jobs in Australia, 2020-21 financial year
Personal Income in Australia, 2020-21 financial year

Detailed data on jobs and income in 2020-21 for nearly 2,500 regions across Australia and over 500 industries was released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, ABS head of labour statistics, said; "The two releases out today – Jobs in Australia (/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/2020-21) and Personal Income in Australia (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/personal-income-australia/2020-21) – provide the richest geographical insights into the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on labour markets and communities across Australia."

"These releases are based on personal income tax data, meaning they're incredibly comprehensive, even if they're not as timely as the other statistics we produce. This rich data provides detailed quarterly and annual insights for regional communities, including labour market information for nearly 2,500 regions across Australia at Statistical Area Levels 2, 3 and 4, plus more than 500 Local Government Areas."

"This enables a much greater ability to explore and compare the pandemic-related impacts across regions, and to better understand which people and businesses were particularly impacted. For example, which industries in a region were the most impacted, since there is also detailed information for more than 500 industries."

Given the impact of pandemic disruptions and restrictions was generally greatest in the capital cities, jobs growth was strongest in other areas. In New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, 59 per cent, 63 per cent and 54 per cent of jobs growth between 2019-20 and 2020-21 was outside of the capital cities, compared to an average of 48 per cent, 28 per cent and 51 per cent over the previous five years.

Jobs growth varied across regions, depending on their relative exposure to pandemic impacts. At the Statistical Area Level 4 level (SA4), Mandurah (up 9 per cent) and Perth – South East (up 9 per cent) in Western Australia saw the largest annual growth in jobs. In contrast, the largest annual fall in jobs were seen in Melbourne – Inner (-5 per cent) and Sydney – City and Inner South (-4 per cent).

Percentage change in number of jobs by SA4, 2020-21

Loading map...

"Overall, there were 20.8 million jobs held in 2020-21, up by more than 800,000 jobs from 2019-20," Mr Jarvis said.

"Looking at this data on a quarterly basis, we can see that the increase in jobs was mainly in the December 2020 and March 2021 quarters, following the initial falls early in the COVID-19 pandemic in the June and September 2020 quarters."

The increase in the number of jobs held in 2020-21 was associated with a larger-than-usual increase in the number of short-term jobs that people worked. The number of jobs lasting between one and thirteen weeks rose by 34 per cent between 2019-20 and 2020-21.

"The increase in short-term jobs – those worked for less than three months – made up 76 per cent of the total increase in jobs in 2020-21," Mr Jarvis said.

The latest data also showed how both employment-related and total income varied across the regions, and compared with before the pandemic. Western Australia - Outback

(North) continued to lead the list of SA4 regions with a total median income of $77,700 in 2020-21, followed by Sydney - Eastern Suburbs at $72,800.

Median total incomes went up across all states and territories, with the Northern Territory recording the largest income growth of 6 per cent.

New data also offers rich insights into migrants' jobs and incomes

In addition to detailed regional and industry information, and detailed demographics, the data also includes a range of migrant data.

The pandemic-related restrictions were also evident in this data, with the number of temporary visa holders who earned employee income falling from 1.3 million in 2019-20 to 1.1 million in 2020-21. Compositional changes in the migrant population during this period was also reflected in much higher median employee income for temporary visa holders – rising from $32,000 in 2019-20 to $42,800 in 2020-21.

The Health care and social assistance industry continued to account for the highest share of jobs held by migrants (14 per cent). Jobs worked by migrants in this industry also steadily increased over 2020-21 (an increase of 23 per cent to 785,400 jobs in 2020-21), and increased for both permanent and temporary migrants.

The Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry saw the largest drop in jobs held by migrants during 2020-21 compared with 2019-20.

"This was largely due to a fall in the jobs held by temporary visa holders in this industry," Mr Jarvis said.

During 2020-21, there were 36,900 jobs in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry held by Working Holiday Makers, down from more than 70,000 jobs in previous years.

Media notes

- In Jobs in Australia and Personal Income in Australia, a 'job' refers to a unique 'job relationship', which is between an employed person and their employer (or their own business). A person can have several jobs (job relationships) throughout the year with one or many employers, some of which may be held concurrently. The same 'job' can be filled by several people throughout the year, and each of these would be a separate 'job relationship'.
- The data included in Jobs in Australia (/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/latest-release#) and Personal Income in Australia (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/personal-income-australia/latest-release) are sourced from the Linked

Employer-Employee Dataset (LEED) (/about/data-services/data-integration/integrated-data/linked-employer-employee-database-leed) which combines Income Tax Returns and Income Statement data from the Australian Taxation Office with ABS business data, and migrant data from the Department of Home Affairs administrative migrant data included in the Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA).

- To learn more about our different labour measures, their purpose and how to use them, see our Guide to labour statistics (/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics) . It provides summary information on labour market topics including Industry employment (/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/industry-employment-guide) and Earnings (/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/earnings-guide) (similar to income) data.
- When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source.
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